LAWRENCE, KANSAS
I'M CROSSBONES. MY GIRLFRIEND'S KNOWN AS SIN...
WE'LL BE YOUR MURDERERS TODAY.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
AHHHH!
AAIIIEEEEEE!
YOU KEEPING SCORE?
NOPE... JUST HAVIN' A GOOD TIME.
WELL, I'M TWO AHEAD OF YOU.
HEY, I LIKE IT WHEN YOU'RE ON TOP.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
KA-BLAM
KA-BLAM
ALL RIGHT-- LOOKS LIKE OUR REAL FUN'S ABOUT TO START.
POLICE
POLICE
YOU WANT FIRST SHOT THIS TIME?
YOU KNOW I DO, BROCK...
THAT'S MY GIRL...NOW, LET'S GO FRY SOME BACON...

THIS IS THE POLICE! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS IN PLAIN SIGHT!
BIAM
HAPPILY.
CHOOM
INCOMING!
KA-WHOOOM
68
POLICE

DAMN. YOU MADE THOSE NEW GRENADES TOO STRONG...LEFT ME NOTHIN' BUT TABLE SCRAPS HERE.
WHAT CAN I SAY? I JUST PREFER WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION SOMETIMES...
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
OH... OH...
WHAT THE HELL...?
HEY! STOP!
AHHHHHH!
UK--
BLAM
SON OF A %#@&!

WHAT'S UP?
THIS SUPPOSEDLY INNOCENT BYSTANDER HERE, I RECOGNIZED HIM. POINDEXTER-LOOKING GUY LIKE THIS, HOW COULD I FORGET?
HE WAS FOLLOWING US... SEEN HIM AT LEAST TWICE SINCE WICHITA.
AND CHECK OUT WHAT'S IN THE TRUNK OF HIS CAR...
BABY...THIS IS JUST WHAT I BEEN HOPIN' WE'D FIND OUT HERE...

COLLISION COURSES PART 1 OF 2

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MIKE PERKINS — ART
FRANK D'ARMATA — COLOR ART
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA — LETTERER
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CAPTAIN AMERICA CREATED BY JOE SIMON AND JACK KIRBY

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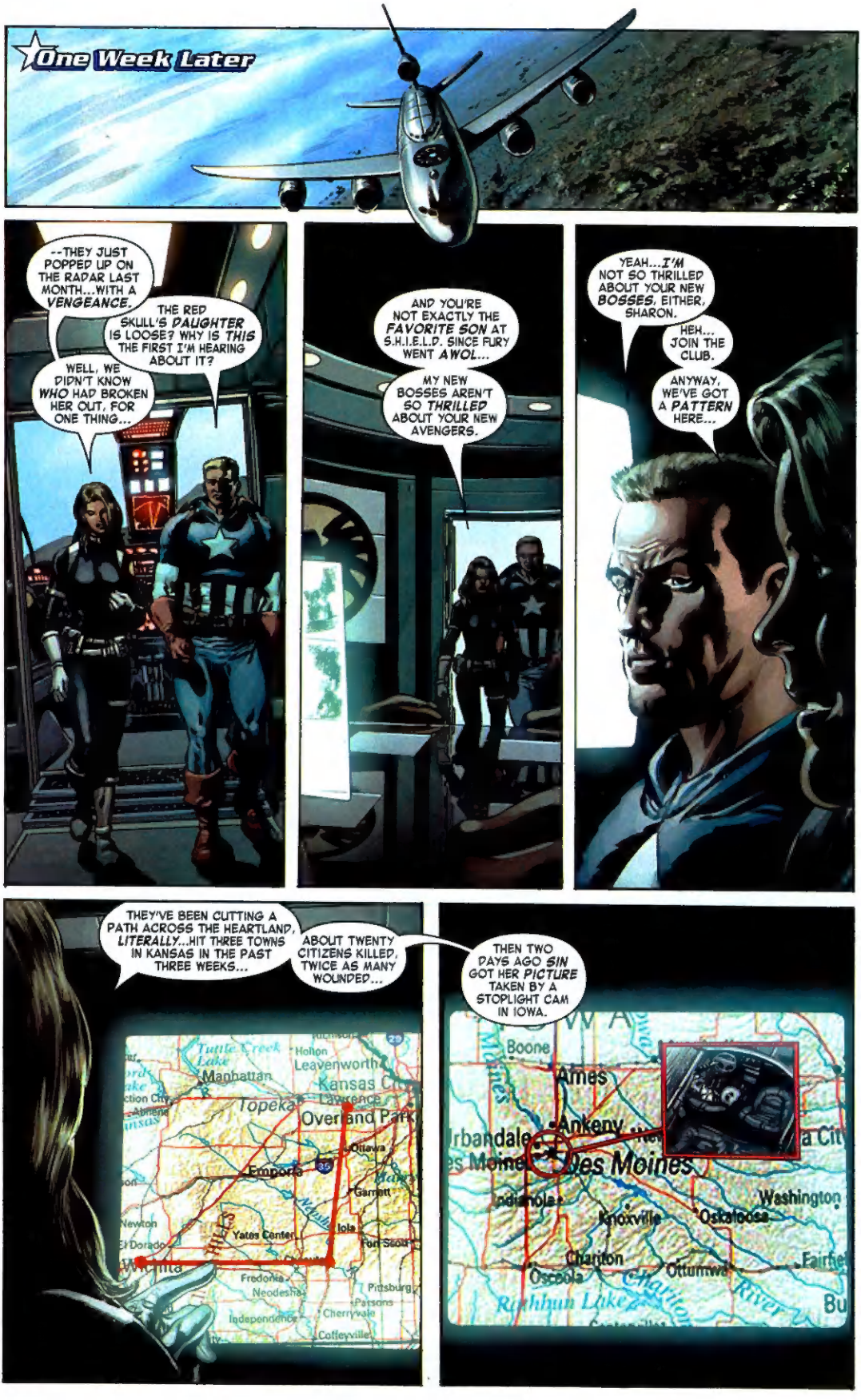
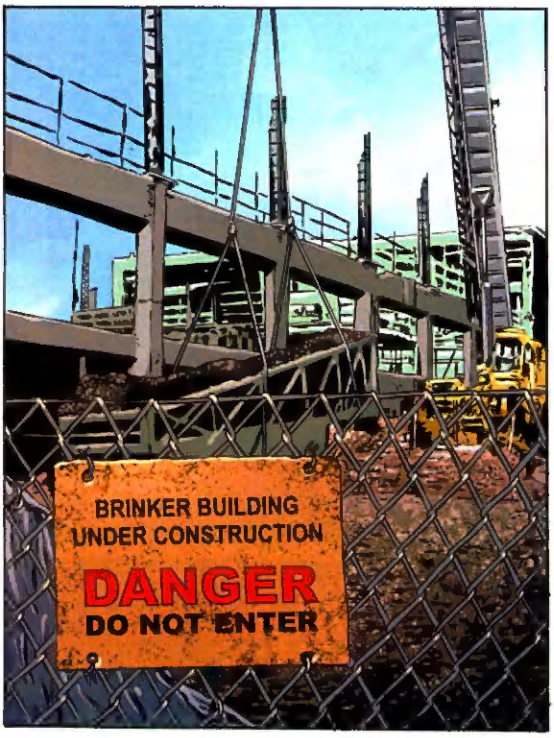

One Week Later
--THEY JUST POPPED UP ON THE RADAR LAST MONTH...WITH A VENGEANCE.
THE RED SKULL'S DAUGHTER IS LOOSE? WHY IS THIS THE FIRST I'M HEARING ABOUT IT?
WELL, WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO HAD BROKEN HER OUT, FOR ONE THING...
AND YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY THE FAVORITE SON AT S.H.I.E.L.D. SINCE FURY WENT AWOL...
MY NEW BOSSES AREN'T SO THRILLED ABOUT YOUR NEW AVENGERS.
YEAH...I'M NOT SO THRILLED ABOUT YOUR NEW BOSSES, EITHER, SHARON.
HEH... JOIN THE CLUB.
ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT A PATTERN HERE...
THEY'VE BEEN CUTTING A PATH ACROSS THE HEARTLAND, LITERALLY...HIT THREE TOWNS IN KANSAS IN THE PAST THREE WEEKS...
ABOUT TWENTY CITIZENS KILLED, TWICE AS MANY WOUNDED...
THEN TWO DAYS AGO SIN GOT HER PICTURE TAKEN BY A STOPLIGHT CAM IN IOWA.
Manhattan
Topeka
Lawrence
Overland Park
Ottawa
Emporia
Garnett
Yates Center
Iola
Fort Scott
Fredonia
Neodesha
Pittsburg
Parsons
Cherryvale
Independence
Coffeyville
Boone
Ames
Ankeny
Des Moines
Knoxville
Oskaloosa
Washington
Chariton
Ottumwa
Osceola

AND SINCE THIS TOWN IS RIGHT IN THE PATH OF CROSSBONES AND SIN'S MIDWEST HELL-TRIP...
WELL, WHAT MY BOSSES DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT THEM, RIGHT?
THANK YOU.
DON'T THANK ME YET...
I'M *STILL* NOT CONVINCED HE DIDN'T *KILL HIMSELF* SIX MONTHS AGO, INSIDE THAT MOUNTAIN IN VIRGINIA...
THIS *ISN'T* THE FIRST TIME, SHARON. HE WAS *SEEN* VOLUNTEERING ON THE CLEANUP EFFORT IN PHILADELPHIA.
SUPPOSEDLY... THAT WAS NEVER VERIFIED.
IT WAS HIM.
HE WAS TRYING TO MAKE UP...IN SOME SMALL WAY... FOR WHAT THE WINTER SOLDIER DID.
I GUESS I'M JUST NOT AS *OPTIMISTIC* AS YOU, STEVE...
BUT I KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS TO *YOU*...THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE.
AND TO LEND A HAND IF WE RUN INTO CROSSBONES AND SIN?
HEY, HAVING A *SUPER-SOLDIER* ON YOUR SIDE'S GOTTA BE GOOD FOR *SOMETHING*, RIGHT?

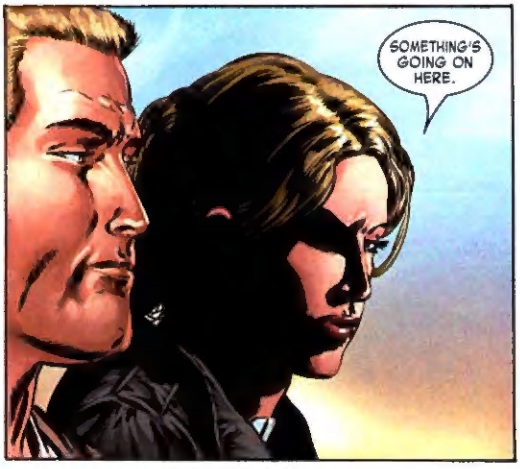
--JUST DON'T SEE WHY SOMEPLACE LIKE S.H.I.E.L.D. WOULD BE *INTERESTED*... MA'AM.
SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
WHY DON'T YOU LET *ME* WORRY ABOUT THAT, DEPUTY?
SURE, IT'S JUST...I MEAN, IT WAS JUST A CAR WRECK.
GUY SMASHES INTO THE BRINKER BUILDING AN' HIS *ENGINE* BLOWS...SETS THE WHOLE PLACE ON FIRE. *LUCKY* NO ONE GOT KILLED.
SHERIFF DESK
VISITORS
STOP·HERE
IS *THIS* THE MAN?
DIDN'T *SEE* HIM, PERSONALLY. BUT THIS LOOKS A BIT LIKE WHAT THE *WITNESSES* SAID.
HIS HAIR WAS *SHORTER*, THOUGH...*IF* IT'S THE SAME GUY.
CAN WE GET A LIST OF THOSE WITNESSES...AND THEIR ADDRESSES?

SURE, I GUESS...BUT, THIS FELLA, HE'S NOT *IN TOWN* ANYMORE...
STOLE A TRUCK AND TORE OFF DOWN THE EAST ROAD, LAST ANYONE SAW.
WE'RE AWARE OF THAT...
THE LIST OF *WITNESSES*, PLEASE?
SURE... JUST TAKE A SEC...
GETTING LATE. YOU WANT TO CHECK IN AT THE HOTEL, OR START INTERVIEWING WITNESSES?
LET'S WALK OVER AND TAKE A LOOK AT THIS *CRASH* SITE.
EVANS CAFE
SURE...BUT WE SHOULD START THINKING ABOUT DINNER PRETTY--


BRINKER BUILDING
UNDER CONSTRUCTION
DANGER
DO NOT ENTER

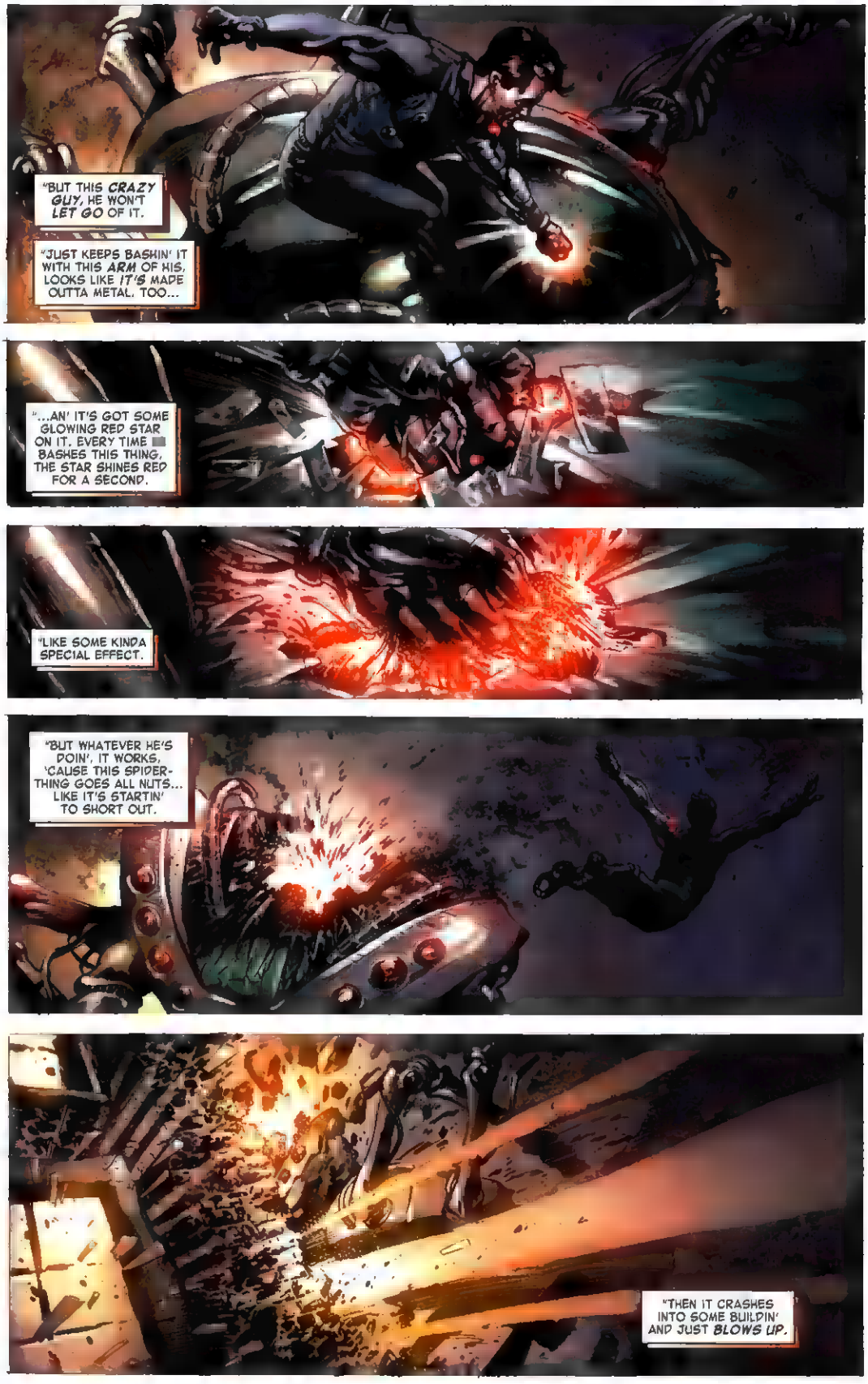
OKAY...ARE YOU THINKING THE SAME THING I AM?
LIKE, HOW THE HELL DOES A TOWN *THIS SMALL* START RECONSTRUCTING A BURNED-DOWN BUILDING THIS QUICKLY?
YEAH.

FAMILY STORE
Lavenne&Shirley CLOTHING
AND IT'S MORE THAN THAT...JUST LOOK AT THIS PLACE. THERE'S NO FACTORY, NO ECONOMY TO SPEAK OF...
BUT IT'S DOING PRETTY WELL FOR SMALL-TOWN AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY.


SOMETHING'S GOING ON HERE.

DEFINITELY.
IT'S NO *COINCIDENCE* BUCK WAS HERE.

AND HOW MANY NIGHTS WILL THAT BE?
JUST ONE, FOR NOW. WILL THERE BE A PROBLEM IF WE NEED TO STAY LONGER?
NO...WE GENERALLY HAVE ROOMS AVAILABLE. JUST LET ME KNOW IN THE MORNING.
SURE.
AND THAT'S TWO ROOMS, OR A SUITE?
TWO ROOMS, PLEASE.
I'M SORRY, THAT PICTURE THERE...WHO IS THAT?
OH, THAT'S THE PREVIOUS OWNER AND HIS WIFE...TAKEN IN THE 1950S, I BELIEVE.
WHAT IS IT, STEVE?
NOT SURE...MAYBE NOTHING.
WELL, LET'S DROP OUR STUFF AND GET SOMETHING TO EAT...I'M FAMISHED...


"BUT THIS CRAZY GUY, HE WON'T LET GO OF IT.
"JUST KEEPS BASHIN' IT WITH THIS ARM OF HIS. LOOKS LIKE IT'S MADE OUTTA METAL, TOO...
"...AN' IT'S GOT SOME GLOWING RED STAR ON IT. EVERY TIME HE BASHES THIS THING, THE STAR SHINES RED FOR A SECOND.
"LIKE SOME KINDA SPECIAL EFFECT.
"BUT WHATEVER HE'S DOIN', IT WORKS, 'CAUSE THIS SPIDER-THING GOES ALL NUTS... LIKE IT'S STARTIN' TO SHORT OUT.
"THEN IT CRASHES INTO SOME BUILDIN' AND JUST BLOWS UP.

"AN' THE CRAZY GUY, HE JUST DISAPPEARS INTO ALL THE SMOKE AND FIRE.
"LIKE IT'S NO BIG DEAL AT ALL..."
AND YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU WERE THE ONLY WITNESS TO THIS?
NO...BUNCHA PEOPLE SAW IT. THEY'RE JUST KEEPIN' THEIR MOUTHS SHUT.
S'WHAT PEOPLE AROUND HERE ARE LIKE, I GUESS. BUT OL' CARLY...I AIN'T FROM HERE.
SO WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT THEIR SECRETS?
YOU SHOULD, CARLY...WHAT PEOPLE KEEP SECRET TELLS YOU WHO THEY ARE.
AND THIS ONE'S TELLING ME YOU BETTER GET YOURSELF OUT OF TOWN...ASAP.
AND DON'T TELL ANYONE YOU TALKED TO US UNTIL YOU DO.
HUNH...?

SHARON! IT'S A TRAP!
GOT YOU COVERED, STEVE!
WAKK
AAAHH--
SMAK

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Trying to fit in lots of letters this month, so let's get to them...

I haven't written to CAPTAIN AMERICA for a while, but issue #14 made me do it! First off, the cover was spectacular. The use of the cosmic cube to meld Lukin and the Red Skull was also priceless. The moment that drove me to write in, however, was when Steve told Bucky to go ahead and shoot. I must admit before turning the page that surely after all of the buildup Bucky/Winter Soldier would not just break down and start sobbing, "Oh, Steve you know I can't do it." I was not disappointed! He shot at him! Having Cap dodge the bullet and leave Bucky dumbfounded was great, but in this humble fan's opinion, I would have liked Cap to take the bullet. We all know it would not have killed him, but the drama! Man, oh man. Anyway, good job with this current run. CAP is one of the three Marvel titles I still read, so please keep up the good work!

Brad Turner
South Burlington, VT

Yeah, I considered having him take the bullet, but my feeling was he was hoping for the best and planning for the worst, so he went with plan B, getting the cube away from the Winter Soldier.

This was the final chapter in the Winter Soldier arc. And what an ending it was. We finally got to see Cap take on his old partner. The tragedy will rock Cap for a good long time...and now Bucky has to live with his own tragedy. He has been brought back to life and turned into a killing machine, a solider for the Russians who has turned against his own home country. What will become of the poor guy now that he is aware of who he truly is? I hope we find out soon, and I look forward to seeing more of Bucky in the future.

I am not one of those readers upset that Bucky has been brought back. Brubaker wrote an awesome story, not some two-issue cheap parlor trick. Bucky's return had meaning, and now Cap's life will never be the same. I look forward to the next storyline, featuring Crossbones and Sin, the daughter of the Red Skull. By the way, great art as always by Steve Epting; and thanks to Ed Brubaker for reigniting my interest in this title, an interest lost when Gruenwald left.

Andrew Burke
(via e-mail)

Thanks, Andrew, I don't think you'll have long to wait to see more of Bucky and what he's up to.

Because we love these comics and characters and respect what has gone before so much, we sometimes speak directly from the heart. Since the story of Bucky's "death" was so moving and sacred, and any thought of really bringing him back was taboo, the idea of actually bringing him back to only have Cap kill him again was, I thought, cruel beyond words. Thank you for not having Cap kill Bucky. As I said, that would have been cruel. Thank you for bringing Bucky back. It was a great story, and it took a lot of courage to actually bring him back in a good imaginative way. I hear he is going to face Wolverine now. I hope he kicks Logan's butt. 'Nuff said indeed.

Carlos M. Fernandez Jr.
(via e-mail)

I just read that issue of WOLVERINE, and indeed, he did kick Logan's butt. Heh heh...But seriously, I would never have had Cap kill Bucky. That would have indeed been too cruel.

I could not put issue #14 down. The suspense was killing me! You've had me gripped since issue #6. The final showdown between Bucky and Cap was breathtaking. I actually didn't think that Bucky would shoot Cap. I thought it was great that Cap used the cosmic cube to help Bucky remember who he is. As for Lukin, you put a great twist in there. Who would have guessed that the Red Skull is in Lukin's mind? But could I ask:

1) Will Cap ever team up with Bucky?

2) If the Red Skull's daughter becomes evil, will she make her face look like her dad's?

Iain Anderson
(via e-mail)

1) It's certainly a possibility.
2) As you can see in this issue, nope.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: What is your least favorite everyday chore?

Ed Brubaker: Cleaning the cat-box. But it is the great equalizer. Cleaning a cat-box will always bring you back down to earth.

Steve Epting: Shaving. And guess what? I don't do it every day.

Mike Perkins: Shaving Steve! I have to do it for him every other day!

Frank D'Armata: Watching Jerry Springer at 8 am.

Aubrey Sitterson: Polishing my robot-arm.

Molly Lazer: Cleaning up after dinner...which probably explains the state of my apartment.

Andy Schmidt: Fersurenoquestiondoingthedishes.

Tom Brevoort: Calling Dan Slott looking for script.

This month's question was submitted by Jeff Plackemeier

As you may remember, I got a letter printed in issue #12 stating my hope that the Winter Soldier was anyone but Bucky. Well, the story arc is over and it's definitely Bucky. And you know what? I'm honestly not sure how I feel about it. On the one hand, I think Bucky is one of those guys that should just stay dead. On the other, the story was well written and was obviously penned with a love and understanding of the characters and the dynamic that they have. So I guess you could call me Captain Ambivalent on this one, guys. I can't say I'm thrilled about the events that took place, but I can honestly say that the story and art were superb (does that makes sense?).

I've always had a healthy dose of respect for Epting and his art. Now I've got the same for Brubaker and his writing. I've also tracked down some of his other work, and Bucky or no Bucky, Brubaker is now easily one of my top three favorite comic writers. You're doing excellent work, sir, and I can't wait for your take on the X-Men.

Jason Hart
San Jose, CA

Thanks, Jason, I'm glad to see that even though it wasn't to your taste, you're sticking around anyway... And at least, unlike the next reader, you're not in denial...

At first I was appalled by the re-introduction of Bucky. But after reading the Winter Soldier storyline, I have concluded that the Winter Soldier is not Bucky Barnes. This is based on his memories being triggered by the cosmic cube. When Cap told him to "remember who you are," he went through several mind flashes and went to Camp Lehigh. But his memories there of meeting Cap are incorrect. First, Cap was never made Corporal, second, his identity was secret, third, Bucky was not asked by the brass to be his partner. Three omissions of that nature cannot be attributed to the current wave of revisionist history. And there is no way the editor would let that pass. Thus, the memories are of the Winter Soldier, or at least what he was programmed with, but the Winter Soldier is not Bucky Barnes. Good story, though.

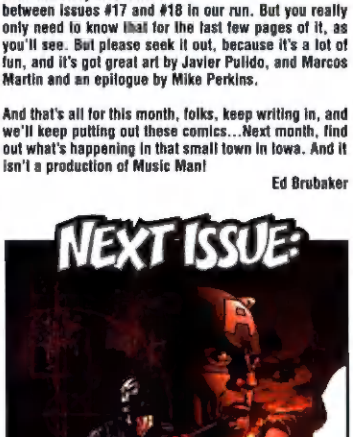
Patrice Stafford
(via e-mail)

Actually, you can count all those minor changes down to "revisionist history" if you want, but really it's just us slightly altering the backstory of Cap and Bucky. As you'll see, in issue #12, Cap remembers the beginning of that scene, and in issue #14, Bucky remembers the end. Some may complain, but I think having the Army brass in on the decision to give Cap a partner is something that not only makes sense, but works with the history of the character. I like the idea that the story about Bucky stumbling into Cap's tent and finding out his secret ID being the propaganda version that was leaked out. But I don't think any 16-year-old without proper training and government approval is fighting side-by-side with Cap and the Invaders during WW2.

Out sometime around the release of this issue is the CAPTAIN AMERICA 65TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL, in case you didn't know about it. This Special is a key piece of the current story, as well as being a stand-alone WW2 adventure featuring Cap and Bucky fighting side-by-side with Sgt. Fury and the Howling Commandos. For continuity buffs, while the Special can be read concurrently with this story arc, it fits in between issues #17 and #18 in our run. But you really only need to know that for the last few pages of it, as you'll see. But please seek it out, because it's a lot of fun, and it's got great art by Javier Pulido, and Marcos Martin and an epilogue by Mike Perkins.

And that's all for this month, folks, keep writing in, and we'll keep putting out these comics...Next month, find out what's happening in that small town in Iowa. And it isn't a production of Music Man!

Ed Brubaker



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